

PAGE:0001

INQUIRE=DOC13D
ITEM NO=00606770
CDS

C 03329SAN SA

15919 090520ZSCO

89-4993560

F

MIDB
UPIDS
08/ /

CONFIDENTIAL

FRP: ,2, ,4, , , ,8

STATE

89 4993560 SCO

PAGE 001
TOR: 090520Z DEC 89NC 4993560
SAN SA 15919HEADER

OO RUEAIIB

25X1

ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH

TOU2362

OO RUEHC

DE RUEHSN #5919/01 3430038

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 090036Z DEC 89

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4236

INFO RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 5591

RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 4016

RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 5965

RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 5024

RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

BT

CONTROLS~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SAN SALVADOR 15919

USFINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

BODY

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, ES

SUBJECT: CRISTIANI BRIEFED ON OFFENSIVE

REF: SAN SALVADOR 15800

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. PRESIDENT CRISTIANI CAME TO THE AMBASSADOR'S
RESIDENCE EVENING DECEMBER 6 TO RECEIVE A BRIEFING ON
THE MILITARY SITUATION BY US ANALYSTS WHO ARE ON TDY
IN EL SALVADOR. THE PRESIDENT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY
ARTURO TONA, HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY; TONA'S BROTHER,
ANTONIO, WHO COORDINATES CRISTIANI'S SECURITY; AND

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PAGE:0002

SAUL SUSTER, WHO IS HEADING THE GOES EXECUTIVE ACTION COMMITTEE AND IS ANTEL PRESIDENT. ALL THREE MEN ARE LONGTIME CRISTIANI FRIENDS.

3. THE PRESIDENT RECEIVED A THOROUGH AND DETAILED BRIEFING ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE FMLN OFFENSIVE: GUERRILLA TROOP STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION, OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS, CASUALTIES, INFILTRATION/EXFILTRATION ROUTES, AND THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY.

4. SEVERAL KEY POINTS WERE EMPHASIZED TO THE PRESIDENT:

--THE FMLN'S NOVEMBER OFFENSIVE IS THE CLOSEST THING TO A "FINAL OFFENSIVE" THAT THE FMLN HAS EVER TRIED. THE GUERRILLAS HAVE THROWN VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING THEY HAVE IN TERMS OF MANPOWER AND RESOURCES INTO THIS EFFORT. SOME 2,000-2,300 COMBATANTS WERE INVOLVED IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE OFFENSIVE. IN ADDITION TO SOME 1,100-1,400 URBAN COMMANDOS, MILITIA TROOPS, AND "MASAS," SOME 900 GUERRILLAS INFILTRATED THE CITY FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

--ACCORDING TO INTERROGATIONS, THE MAJORITY OF THE FMLN DEAD AND WOUNDED ARE FROM THE MILITIAS AND THE SUPPORT ("MASAS") ORGANIZATIONS AND NOT MORE EXPERIENCED TROOPS. THE HARD CORE, EXPERIENCED FIGHTERS HAVE NOT SUFFERED EXTREME LOSSES, MEANING THAT APPROXIMATELY 700-800 REMAIN IN THE CAPITAL AREA AND ARE AVAILABLE TO FIGHT.

--ALL-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF GUERRILLAS, NUMBERING SOME 800, IN AREAS AROUND THE METRO AREA. AS LONG AS THESE GROUPS REMAIN, THE CAPITAL WILL BE VULNERABLE TO HARASSMENTS, SABOTAGE, AND SMALL TO MID-SIZE ATTACKS. ROUTING THESE FMLN POCKETS AND THE GUERRILLAS' COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPACITY IS KEY FOR THE ESAF AT THIS JUNCTURE. FURTHERMORE, SEVERAL GUERRILLA SUPPLY ROUTES INTO THE CITY HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND SHOULD BE TARGETTED BY THE ARMED FORCES.

--OVER THE PAST WEEKS, THE GUERRILLAS HAVE KIDNAPPED SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO REPLENISH THEIR RANKS. THESE FORCED RECRUITS SERVE IN COMBAT AND IN LOGISTIC CAPACITIES. THEY OFTEN RECEIVE ONLY MINIMAL TRAINING BEFORE THEY ARE THROWN INTO COMBAT.

--WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ADDITIONAL FORCED RECRUITS AND RETURNING REFUGEES, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF AN FMLN "STRATEGIC RESERVE" TO REPLENISH FIGHTERS OR

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE:0003

SIGNIFICANTLY AUGMENT GUERRILLA CAPABILITIES.
MOREOVER, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY OUTSIDE OR
FOREIGN HELP PREPARING TO JOIN THE GUERRILLAS.

--INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE FPL CONTRIBUTED MOST
OF ITS SPECIAL FORCES TO THE FINAL OFFENSIVE.
INFILTRATION OF FPL FORCES INTO THE CAPITAL AREA
BEGAN AS EARLY AS SEPTEMBER. THOSE GUERRILLA TROOPS
WHO STAYED BEHIND WERE CHARGED WITH TIEING DOWN ESAF
UNITS IN THE NORTH. INFILTRATION ROUTES FROM THE
NORTHERN FRONT, PRIMARILY CHALATENANGO, HAVE BEEN
IDENTIFIED. THESE SAME ROUTES MAY BE USED BY THE
GUERRILLAS TO EXFILTRATE AS WELL. CHOKE POINTS HAVE
BEEN IDENTIFIED TO FACILITATE ESAF BLOCKING ACTIONS.

--FMLN CONCENTRATIONS REMAIN IN THE ZACATECOLUCA AREA
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 15919

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, ES
SUBJECT: CRISTIANI BRIEFED ON OFFENSIVE

AND FIGHTING CONTINUES AROUND THE CITY, ESPECIALLY ON
THE SAN VICENTE VOLCANO. THE INTENSITY AND DURATION
OF THE COMBAT IN ZACATECOLUCA SUGGESTS THAT THE FMLN
THOUGHT THAT IT COULD CAPTURE OR EFFECTIVELY CONTROL
THE CITY.

5. THE AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED TO CRISTIANI THAT THE
BRIEFING HELPS TO CLARIFY WHAT THE FMLN HAS DONE AND
TO SHOW WHERE THE GUERRILLAS NOW STAND. THE
AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE GOES SHOULD NOT BE PASSIVE
ON THE POLITICAL FRONT. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE
GOVERNMENT GO PUBLIC WITH SOME OF THE INFORMATION TO
INFORM THE POPULATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION,
EMPHASIZE THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITIVE PERFORMANCE AND
ROLE IN RELIEF EFFORTS, AND TO DISPEL RUMORS AND
COUNTER FMLN DISINFORMATION. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE
AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE GOES SHOULD EXPLOIT FOR
POLITICAL/PROPAGANDA POINTS THE FACT THAT THE
GUERRILLAS ARE FORCIBLY RECRUITING CHILDREN.

6. CRISTIANI AGREED THAT THE GOES MUST MATCH ITS
POLITICAL EFFORTS WITH ITS THUS FAR SUCCESSFUL
MILITARY EFFORTS. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO
MAKE THE FMLN FEEL POLITICAL AS WELL AS MILITARY
PRESSURE. CRISTIANI ASKED IF PRESENTING A SIMILAR
BRIEFING ON NATIONAL TV/RADIO WOULD BE HELPFUL. THE
AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD INDEED BE USEFUL
IF IT WERE DONE CREDIBLY, BY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF
IF POSSIBLE, AND DONE WELL. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE:0004

MAYBE HE, AS OPPOSED TO AN ESAF OFFICER, WOULD MAKE THE PRESENTATION. CRISTIANI LAMENTED THE FACT THAT IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE KILLING OF THE JESUIT PRIESTS THE POLITICAL SITUATION WOULD BE DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT. ON THE SAME SUBJECT, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAS ASKED THE SUPREME COURT TO NAME A JUDGE TO WORK SPECIFICALLY AND ONLY ON THE JESUIT CASE. CRISTIANI REMINDED THE ASSEMBLED GROUP THAT, DESPITE WHAT OUTSIDERS THINK, HE AS PRESIDENT CANNOT "ORDER" THE SUPREME COURT TO DO ANYTHING. THE PRESIDENT ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE JUDICIAL PROCESS PLAY MORE OF A ROLE IN COMBATTING THE GUERRILLAS. HE ADDED--WITH A TOUCH OF SKEPTICISM--THAT HE "WOULD HAVE TO FIND A COURAGEOUS JUDGE" TO WORK IN THIS AREA.

7. CRISTIANI AND HIS TEAM ASKED SEVERAL "WHAT LIES AHEAD" QUESTIONS. THEY WERE INFORMED THAT THE FMLN HAS SEVERAL LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF TROOPS AROUND THE CITY THAT WERE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING ATTACKED BY THE ESAF. THE PRESIDENT WAS WARNED THAT IF THESE AND OTHER GROUPS WERE NOT ROUTED, THEY COULD REINFILTRATE INTO THE CITY OR REGROUP IN OTHER AREAS. SUSTER EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY THAT CONTINUOUS HIT-AND-RUN ATTACKS WOULD HAVE.

WALKER

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL